

STORAGE-ITEM
MAIN LIBRARY

LP9-R15G
U.B.C. LIBRARY

THE LIBRARY



THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Gift

Mr. William Heryet

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of British Columbia Library



6
A

LETTER

TO
DANIEL K. SANDFORD, ESQ.

PROFESSOR OF GREEK IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW,

IN ANSWER TO

THE STRICTURES

OF

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

ON THE

OPEN COLLEGES OF OXFORD.

BY A MEMBER OF A CLOSE COLLEGE.

Either this is envy in you, folly, or mistaking. Let him be but testified in his own bringings forth, and he shall appear to the envious a scholar, a statesman. Therefore you speak unskilfully, or if your knowledge be more, it is much darkened in your malice.

Measure for Measure, Act III.

There is scarce truth enough alive to make societies secure, but security enough to make fellowships accursed. *Ibid.*

OXFORD,

PRINTED BY W. BAXTER,

FOR J. PARKER; AND F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
YARD, AND WATERLOO-PLACE, LONDON.

1822.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS it is impossible to understand this Letter without a knowledge of the passage which gave occasion to it, the Author ventures to hope, that any one who may deem it worth examination, will begin with perusing the following extract from the Edinburgh Review, No. LXX. Art. 3. p. 310—12.

“ In many of the Colleges (of Oxford), by
“ the ludicrous enactments of the founders, fit-
“ ness for election is restricted to some parti-
“ cular school, diocese, county, or kindred, to
“ which their wisdom has deemed it proper to
“ confine it. Yet, strange to say, it is among
“ the Fellows so chosen alone that we are to
“ look for men who really deserve to have been

“ eligible, and who almost countenance the
“ folly of this mode of obtaining independence,
“ by the good and active use they make of it.
“ It seems as if, in those academic regions,
“ certainty were a better stimulus than hope;
“ and that, since peculiar circumstances have
“ given them a claim to the situation, they an-
“ ticipate it as one in which distinction is to be
“ acquired, and are more intent upon the dis-
“ cipline of their own minds, and the cultiva-
“ tion of the necessary branches of knowledge,
“ than those are likely to be who have to hunt
“ tutors, and canvass for votes in the Colleges
“ where the elections are open. If the scope
“ of Mr. Brougham’s truly patriotic exertions
“ were to be extended, as we cordially wish to
“ see it, so as to embrace the English Uni-
“ versities, we should hardly so much desire to
“ have his keen and caustic scrutinies directed
“ towards the Colleges in which the elections
“ are close, as towards those which profess to
“ offer their Fellowships to the indiscriminate
“ competition of all learning and ability;—
“ except, indeed, it happen to be Irish. But to

“ the wisdom and humanity of this exception,
“ it is clearly impossible to oppose a single
“ argument. The brogue is such a black, pre-
“ meditated crime, that the misjudging infant
“ who lisps those wilful accents, is fairly
“ doomed to a youth of beggary—no ill-ima-
“ gined training for a life of proscriptions.

“ It is in *these* half-open institutions, that
“ inquiry would detect the true spirit of the
“ Monkish system in full and flagrant opera-
“ tion. Place power in the hands of a con-
“ ceited, ignorant, illiberal recluse, and it asks
“ no gift of prophecy to foresee the inevitable
“ consequence. With feline attachment to
“ localities, such a being soon contracts the
“ prudish air and treacherous propensities of
“ the retromingent animal from which that nar-
“ row sentiment is imitated. No antiquated
“ virgin more resembles her own tabby in du-
“ plicity, malice, and demureness. The sleek
“ disguise of imbecility, the abuse of his mise-
“ rable rights, the instinctive preservation of his
“ apprehensive egotism from the contact of
“ superior brilliancy, which he knows to be as

“ little catching as gallantry itself, become the
“ first objects in existence with this hater of a
“ joke. The creature must be ‘ followed,
“ sought, and sued :’ taste must listen to its
“ paradoxes, and talent tremble at its frown.
“ Let a young man only abdicate the privilege
“ of thinking—to some no painful sacrifice—
“ and devote his whole body and soul to the
“ sordid ambition of success, and the ‘ way to
“ win’ with such electors is no formidable pro-
“ blem. As an undergraduate, he must comb
“ his hair smooth, avoid cleanliness and
“ essences, be regular at Latin prayers, and
“ sedulous in capping. After a dull examina-
“ tion in the Schools—if a failure so much the
“ better—he may begin to be the butt of
“ Common-rooms, circulate tutors’ wit, and
“ prose against the Edinburgh Review. With
“ a hopeless virginity of face, sacred from the
“ violence of meaning—with a manner so nicely
“ balanced between the weight of manhood
“ and the decent levity of youth, that it happily
“ escapes the gracefulness of either—guiltless
“ of fame, originality, or humour—our tyro

“ may then approach the scene of action,
“ secure that the judges will take good care
“ that ‘ the race shall not be to the swift, nor
“ the battle to the strong.’ Hardy professions
“ of impartiality are indeed held forth, to at-
“ tract unwary merit; and selfish mediocrity
“ finds the most exquisite of all its gratifica-
“ tions in the momentary chance of harassing
“ the talent it would tremble to confront. The
“ candidates are locked up to write themes—
“ solve a Sorites—discover the Latin for an
“ earthquake—and perform other equally edify-
“ ing tasks :—and the close of this solemn farce
“ is the annunciation of a choice that had been
“ long before determined, in proportion to the
“ scrapings, grins, and genuflections of the
“ several competitors. Who can be surprised
“ if, under a system like this, genius and
“ knowledge should so seldom strike a last-
“ ing root? or that the maturity which suc-
“ ceeds to a youth so prostituted, should pro-
“ duce, by its most vigorous efforts, nothing
“ better than obscene verses in a newspaper,
“ or discourses upon Predestination? In many,

“ and in very important respects, Oxford has
“ undoubtedly improved upon its former self ;
“ but, in all points of right sentiment or liberal
“ feeling, it is still the same University that
“ stripped Locke of a studentship, and refused
“ Johnson a degree.”

A

L E T T E R,

&c.

SIR,

THE extract, which I have prefixed as an introduction to my Letter, will probably already have led you to surmise, that I am taking up my pen for the purpose of repelling the attack ventured on Oxford in the last number but one of the Edinburgh Review. As you, Sir, from being connected almost equally with Edinburgh and with us, seem marked out for umpire in the quarrel, I take the liberty of addressing you as judge of the lists, well satisfied that my opponent, whoever he may be, can have no ground for impugning the fairness of the nomination.

What could induce the editor of the Edinburgh Review to admit so unprovoked, so violent, and (I must add) so suspicious an invective

B

into his pages, after the lesson which he received, eleven years ago, on the danger of crediting assertions against Oxford, I cannot guess ; unless he thought with foolish Balak, that he might succeed in attaching those reproaches to a part of us, which it were vain to think of fixing on the whole. But we will not suffer ourselves to be divided in character, any more than to be beaten in detail : at least, an enemy, to effect it, must be craftier than our present assailant. The foe, who warns us in his battle-cry^a, that though particular Colleges are the points attacked, the reputation of Oxford is the fortress to be carried, will be sure of finding those points manned with more defenders than he looked for, and of receiving from one of them the chastisement he deserves.

That one I was long in hope would be some other person than myself. But no one seems ready for the office, though the punishment has been too long deferred ; and I have accord-

^a “ In all points of right sentiment or liberal feeling, it “ (Oxford) is still the same University that stripped Locke “ of a studentship, and refused Johnson a degree.”

ingly determined on supplying the deficiency, notwithstanding the sacrifice of fastidiousness which it may cost me. Small as my powers may be, I know them more than equal to the task. In fulfilling it, not a word will, I trust, escape me, unauthorized by the truth of the case, and the real demerits of my opponent. But within these ample limits I shall take leave to expatiate at large, nor forbear an expression for its severity, provided I am certain of its justice. My chief object I have stated to be punishment. And who ever wittingly inflicted a punishment too gentle to be felt? Who ever wrapt a whip in velvet? To you indeed, who know, as well as I do, the falseness of the charges I am to expose, I need tender no apology for my terms. To the editor of the Review, and the writer of the article, who, without professing to allege a single proof, have accused us, in direct terms, of ignorance, illiberality, duplicity, malice, selfishness, I shall vouchsafe none. To every other reader I must repeat my request, that before he proceeds further, he will carefully peruse the extract which forms the introduction to my Letter.

Let him enter upon the subject with his attention roused by the extent and grossness of the provocation given; let him consider what it is, to have his friends traduced, his home vilified, his country held up to scorn: and, when I tell him, that, to me and to every one brought up within its walls, especially if supported by its munificence, Oxford is in a special sense both home and country—a literary country, an intellectual home—I cannot doubt his sympathising with my warmth: his feelings will vibrate in unison with the deepest tones of my indignation. But I will bring the matter to a short issue. My antagonist has attacked Colleges in Oxford, not distantly, as perhaps prudence might have counselled, with those contemptuous sighs and unprophetic warnings, those vamped theories, and off-hand insinuations, the licensed artillery of professional philosophers, which his brethren are so fond of employing; birdbolts, which they might have tried at their pleasure upon us; but he has adduced a regular charge in the shape of a specific accusation. If that accusation be true; and I consent, as far as I am con-

cerned, that it pass for the most undoubted truth, unless I shew it to be a palpable falsehood; let this one merit of truth screen it from censure, and be deemed a justification of all the faults which it abounds in, numerous as those faults are. And further, even though I prove it undeniably and ridiculously false, let me still be condemned as blameably unwarranted in the unceremonious superiority of my tone, unless, in addition to that falsehood, I can also prove it to be fraught with malignity, virulence, personality, and cowardice. All I solicit in return is, that in case I accomplish my undertaking, redeem my pledge, and point out in his accusation almost every defect which can disgrace a charge, I may be forgiven my unwillingness to stoop to an equality with an unprovoked, a scurrilous, and, as he will then be, a convicted defamer.

But to commence my answer to the accusation; which appears reducible to the three following heads:

First, That in Oxford men of distinguished talents and attainments are to be found *only*

in those Colleges where the Fellowships are close^b:

Secondly, That in those Colleges where the Fellowships ought to be open, ^cthe elections are grossly partial ;—^dthe examinations ridiculously insufficient ;—^eand the trial merely nominal, the true road to success lying through a low previous personal canvass :

Thirdly, That the grossness of the partiality is so palpable, and so reducible to proof, that the Education Committee^f could take cognizance

^b “ In many of the Colleges, fitness for election is restricted to some particular school, diocese, county, or kindred. Yet it is among the Fellows *so chosen alone* that we are to look for men who really deserve to have been eligible.”

^c “ Our tyro may approach the scene of action, secure that *the race shall not be to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.* *Hardy professions of impartiality* are indeed held forth, to attract unwary merit.”

^d “ The candidates are locked up to write themes—solve a Sorites—discover the Latin for an earthquake—and perform other *equally edifying* tasks.”

^e “ The conclusion of this solemn farce is the annunciation of *a choice that had been long before determined, in proportion to the scrapings, grins, and genuflections of the several competitors.*”

“ *The creature must be ‘followed, sought, and sued.’ “ To hunt Tutors, and canvass for votes, in the Colleges where the elections are open.”*”

^f “ If the scope of Mr. Brougham’s truly patriotic ex-

of it, were the University subjected to their supervision.

Of these, only the two first are allegations of fact. The third, strictly speaking, expresses merely an opinion. The facts then I intend to prove disgracefully false; the opinion I intend to prove ridiculously silly: and having done so, as I trust I shall, with no other difficulty, than what will arise from the embarrassment incidental to the detail in which my refutation must involve me, I shall hurry as speedily, as may be, to my conclusion.

It will have struck every one at first sight, with how easy a test for trying his own veracity the

ertions were to be extended, as we cordially wish to see it, to the English Universities, we should hardly so much desire to have his keen and caustic scrutinies directed towards the Colleges in which the elections are close, *as towards those which profess to offer their Fellowships to the indiscriminate competition of all learning and ability*:—except, indeed, it happen to be Irish." This is a limitation which I conclude (for I never heard of it before) must originate in the wording of the statutes of the particular Colleges referred to. As, however, I have abstained purposely from seeking private information, that I might prove the Reviewer to be as inexcusable as he is incorrect, I am obliged to pass over the clause without remark.

Reviewer has provided me, in his first proposition. Whether the motives, which influenced an elector, were good or bad, can hardly ever be matter of more than surmise. But whether a certain body of persons have enjoyed, during a given period, a monopoly of distinctions in an University, where the examinations are public, and the result known to all enquirers, is a point to be ascertained in a spare half hour by any one who can count his fingers. Let the Reviewer then be sure of his first proposition, or his second will not find a hearer. For shew him wrong in his statement of facts, and who will listen to his calculation of motives? prove that he has shut his eyes to what is evident, and who will believe that he has tracked what is obscure; until a man's having missed certainty, is found to qualify him for arriving at probability; or until the Reviewer himself acknowledges his vaguest guess to be more credible than his plainest asseveration?

The proposition, which must, from its nature, be thus decisive of my opponent's character for truth, you will remember amounts to this: That *all* the distinguished men in Oxford are

holders of close Fellowships, *none* consequently being holders of open ones. Now Balliol and Oriel are the two Colleges in Oxford, where the elections are supposed to be the most open; and Brasen-nose is, not only, on the whole, the closest College, but, what is yet more to the purpose, by far the most evidently and calculably advantageous instance of the great merit compatible with the close system. The extreme difference, in this respect, between the two first and the last, will appear from the following details.

The foundation of Balliol consists, at present, of a Master and twelve Fellows; of whom, ten may come from any part of the kingdom, the other two must be elected from Tiverton school. That of Oriel is now composed of a Provost and eighteen Fellows. Four of their Fellowships, which were added by John Frank, Master of the Rolls, are for the counties of Somerset, Dorset, Wilts, and Devon. The other fourteen are supposed to be open. Of ^sBrasen-nose suffice it here to state, that it

^e Its restrictions are so nicely complicated, that I must copy them as a curiosity. But the note would be too long

is governed by a Principal, and contains twenty Fellowships, all, more or less, close.

From this statement it appears, that the close Fellowships of Brasen-nose are, to the open ones of Balliol, as two to one, and to the open ones of Oriel, as ten to seven. Let us see whether the University honours obtained by their respective holders, instead of preserving the same relative proportions, incline decidedly on one side; and that one, the side of the close Fellowships; as must needs be the case, supposing the obnoxious proposition to be true. I say “University honours,” chiefly, because they are the criterion, which, after the eulogy that, towards the beginning of his article, he has passed upon one main branch of them, the Reviewer himself would probably select; and it is *his truth* that is at issue. Independently of this, however, they doubtless in themselves afford the safest, if not the only, public test of ability and scholarship in Oxford. Brilliant individual exceptions we know there will be, for insertion in this place, especially as besides the account of Brasen-nose, it must contain some incidental observations upon the uses of close Fellowships; and I have accordingly reserved it for the end.

owing probably to “the awkwardness of growing genius.” But considered as a means of striking the average of the disposable active talent scattered through large bodies of men, they are excellent. And the larger the sphere of calculation, the more certain the result; what, between two men, is a not unlikely standard, becoming, between two hundred, a certain test. To take, for instance, the very honours, on which the Reviewer has so largely expatiated, those acquirable by the candidates for a degree, (if I may be forgiven, Sir, the indelicacy of referring you so publicly to a distinction, which you are known so justly to have obtained,) it is quite certain that no one can make his way into the first class, without having much, about him, that is desirable and uncommon, in degree at least, and combination, if not in kind. The power and will to apply, with equal attention, to a variety of subjects differing in character and in interest, activity, perseverance, precision, retentiveness—all these things he must have, to qualify him for aiming at the distinction; and he must superadd to them readiness, and self-possession, to ensure it. Not that these qualities after all are more than

instruments, ^bthe hands and feet of the mind ; but still they are the very feet which, throughout the whole career and struggle of life, as well as in University examinations, must carry us to the goal we have in prospect, and the very hands which must grasp for us the treasures we desire. Without them the mind would be lame and impotent, and the greatest abilities only genius “en pendule,” motionless for days together, and, when set a going, irregular in oscillation. The same in a degree holds good of the University prizes, except (that, as writing has more of action, and so of choice in it, than mere study) for much of the stress on the instrumental faculties is substituted, in the strife of composition, a call on the judgment at least, if on nothing higher, to provide discrimination and steadiness of mind, and above all that happy coordination of powers, which is indispensable to regular and fluent composition.

These two species of distinction effect, between them, as much perhaps as can be hoped from stimulus ; and that College, out of the three in question, has a right to pass for the

* For this image I am indebted I believe to Mr. Coleridge.

richest in disposable active talent, which can count the greatest number of both. And which is that? The following table of the number of Fellows admitted at each, since Michaelmas 1807, (when the examinations assumed their present form,) with the appended list of the honours which they have severally obtained in the Schools, will take us one step towards an answer.

First Classes. Men.

<i>Balliol.</i>	Eight elected on open Fellowships, all of whom were in one or other First Class, and one in both.	9	8
<i>Oriel.</i>	(Counting the two probationers elected last Easter,) seventeen Fellows admitted, of whom four were in both First Classes; seven in one; and three in both Second, which are about equivalent to a single First.	18	17
<i>Brasen-nose.</i>	Seventeen Fellows admitted, of whom twelve were in the First Class.	12	17

That is to say, on the first rough view of the case, the recorded distinctions of these calumniated open Colleges are to those of the close College as three to two. These most decisive statements, decisive of the merits of the case, decisive of the character and composition of the open Colleges, decisive, above all, of the Reviewer's truth, are not collected from scattered or doubtful sources, with a difficulty and trouble which might have palliated his incorrectness, though they could not have excused his malignity. They are to be bought nearly word for word—and my opponent must have known it, Sir, as well as you do--in the Oxford University Calendar for five and sixpence: not so extravagant a price for truth, but that one would imagine the Reviewer might have afforded it!

Quanti emptæ? Parvo. Quanti ergo? Octussibus.

His Editor doubtless would; who, if report may be credited, pays so much] higher for what he cannot still ensure against being falsehood.

But it is time to proceed to my other criterion, the Chancellor's prizes. I find one

among the eight Fellows of Balliol; nine among the seventeen Fellows of Oriel; and three, all united in Mr. Milman, at Brasen-nose. Does this improve the Reviewer's prospects? Are three to one, smaller odds than three to two? or does he prefer having his assertion disproved in the proportion of ten to three, rather than in that of twenty-seven to twelve? Is he yet satisfied, or must I press him further? Must I tell him, that he has no right to those three prizes, which he so poorly opposes to the ten? His very foundations totter under him: the reputation of Mr. Milman, undoubtedly the greatest, in a literary point of view, which Oxford has produced since its new system, avails him nothing; for Mr. M. alas! was elected on a Fellowship accidentally thrown open by the non-appearance of a qualified claimant.

*Transfuga, divitum
Partes linquit;*

He substracts himself and his name from the boasted wealth of the close Fellowships, and hurries in the nakedness of three prizes, and, if you will, of his Jerusalem to boot, to range himself with the open Colleges.

Nor is he solitary in his desertion ! Another Fellow, and another first class, must be deducted on the same account ; which leaves ten first classes and no prizes, the sum total of fifteen close Fellowships ; to array against twenty-seven first classes and ten prizes, the product of twenty-five open ones : so that, on an average, among the holders of close Fellowships, three men go to two distinctions ; whilst among the holders of open ones, three distinctions go to two men : the last, as it appears, more than doubling the first, in aggregate of recorded exertion. And yet, after justly allowing these very first to be possessed of knowledge, ability, and merit, the Reviewer asserts, that the whole of the last are ignorant, stupid, and undeserving ; after holding up the lesser to public admiration, he devotes the greater to popular scorn, and would fain denounce them for state inquisition. And this is the gentleman who loves Oxford !

Ex amore, admodum quam sævus est !

But doubtless this ill-requited passion furnishes the explanation of his truth ; and his

assertion is a lover's oath, to be understood with a negative before it.

Proceed we to the second charge, That in those Colleges where the Fellowships ought to be open, the elections are grossly partial;—the examination ridiculously insufficient;—and the trial merely nominal, the real road to success lying through a low personal previous canvass; and as it evidently consists of three clauses or counts, each of them shall be considered separately.

But before we enter on it, let me again ask, after the stigma just branded on the Reviewer's credit, “Who will hear his accusation?” or rather, “Who will allege it?” Conceive the absurdity of his urging it himself; conceive his returning to the court in which his falsehood has so lately been established; with a “Do suffer me this once again. Do take my assertion without proof, “now that you have seen all proof is against me. “I only slander where I can be proved slanderous; on points where exposure is difficult, “I make it a matter of conscience to be veracious.” And I too cry, “Suffer him once

" again ; suffer him to pay to the full his tributary abuse to our University ; suffer him to receive to the uttermost his self-sought punishment from justice."

To begin then with the charge of gross partiality. Did such a weakness really exist among electors, let us calculate to what results it would lead them. Surely, to filling up the vacancies in their number, either from their own relatives, or from the younger part of their own Society. Family interests would suggest the first step, and College feelings the second, while individual attachment, or (if it must needs be so) affection for "scrapings and genuflections," would prompt to both. Supposing then the partiality complained of to exist, with it must needs co-exist one or other of these two diagnostics, though much more probably the latter, (especially in Societies where the electors are numerous,) from the wider influence of the College feeling, as common to the whole body. Now having got the principle, let us look to the facts ; and we shall find, that no two of the twenty-five Fellows of Balliol and Oriel, so often referred to, are brothers, or, I believe,

even relations ; that the majority of them were chosen out of other Colleges ; and that, of those who have been selected by either body from its own Students, there is not a single individual but has justified the choice, before the conclusion of his academical career. But why speak further of the matter ? The Reviewer's silence is acquittal in full. The only overt acts, which could afford presumption of partiality, are not even alleged by him against us. What then remains but to conclude, that the partiality objected to is of that peculiar kind, unbiassed by personal feelings, unswayed by private interests, unwarped by corporate affections, which (from contradicting the other species of the failing, and disregarding every object that men are usually partial to) has hitherto passed, for distinction's sake, by the separate name of *impartiality*. Of this kind we are indeed guilty. But the next time the Edinburgh Review takes the trouble of accusing us truly, we will thank it to abstain from expressing the charge in so unusual and strange a manner, as totally to misrepresent the character of our offence, and in fact lead

people to imagine it directly the reverse of what it is.

But, thirdly, the examination for open Fellowships is a solemn farce, “the candidates being called on to write themes, solve “a Sorites, discover the Latin for an earthquake, *and perform other equally edifying tasks.*” And what are these other tasks, placed, if any thing, below the earthquake, in this accurate historic scale? The chief of them consists, as you, Sir, probably well know, in rendering at sight passages chosen by the electors from some half dozen Greek and Latin authors: so that such rendering is an exercise too trifling to be noticed, even when a Sorites and an earthquake are specified. To do justice, either to the peculiarity of mind which has misled the Reviewer into this strange notion, if he holds it, or to the peculiarity of morals which has influenced his statement, if by accident he holds it not, would carry me too far from the point at issue. Enough, that, when the examination is duly described as consisting, partly of Greek and Latin passages to be rendered off hand, and

partly of composition in Latin and English prose, (and these two are evidently its two main branches,) no one but the Reviewer will be disposed to question its being a well-devised and sufficient test of the attainments and abilities of Students.

But it differs from the system adopted by the University, which the Reviewer is so eloquent in praise of. To be sure it does; as fighting from fencing, or as a battle differs from a review. It is a step higher in the scale of difficulty; an advance from evolution to action. You are no longer to be satisfied with carrying your weapon through a practised series of parades; but are called on to prove your command of it, in unexpected and perhaps new situations. The University indeed contents itself with the lesser degree of expertness; but it does so from necessity, and not from choice. It knows that it must carry its system along a level accessible to men of ordinary powers and learning, or the great majority of those who go thither would miss the advantages of education. Besides, it has an important public duty to perform, and a difficult

problem to solve. Students of all abilities, opportunities, and attainments, from the highest almost to the lowest, come in crowds yearly for instruction. The exertions of the whole are to be elicited and directed; the industry of the whole, as far as possible, is to be insured. Though the few are not to be sacrificed to the many ; the many in their turn (a more likely danger) are not to be neglected for the few ; and the interests of both are to be secured and reconciled, without exposing the Students to the hazard of being divided into intellectual casts, of all casts the most absurd and noxious. These are the real ends which the University has to fulfil, and her system is admirably fitted to their completion, by the three great principles on which it has been erected ; by its comprehensiveness, its elasticity, and its unity ; the first quality enabling it to contract itself to the smallest, the second to expand itself to the largest mind, while the third associates both weak and strong in following after a common object, and leaves them to differ only in the success of their pursuit. Our details are filled up in the same spirit. We

prevent the indolent from seeking short cuts to scholarship, by requiring all to leave their tracks along the regular road. We allure the braver and more promising of the spirits entrusted to our management from wasting or misemploying their time, by holding out a premium on the study of certain standard books: not as deeming the perusal an opus operatum of supernatural efficacy, to endue a mind with truth and vigour; but from having practically ascertained it to be the likeliest, among known methods, for calling the latent faculties into action, and for arousing the individual to educate himself.

But though the mode of examination, at which the Reviewer sneers, would ill suit the purposes of the University at large; it is singularly appropriate at a private College election, where the examiners, without troubling themselves about general proficiency, have only to ascertain individual superiority. Let them but discover which of the competitors is the ablest and best qualified individual, and their object is accomplished. Can they do better, than provide themselves with the highest test? espe-

cially when a branch of it affords also to the candidate the easiest opportunity for exhibiting both his scholarship and his classical taste, each in its greatest degree, and each in its fullest perfection? For scholarship, to be considered perfect, should, if called into action as a distinct element, be able to possess itself of the whole mind, swaying it to think the thoughts and breathe the language of antiquity as purely, entirely, and exclusively, as if St. Paul had yet to preach before the Areopagus, and the majesty of the Roman people still remained a sound of reverence and power. But though under the influence of any peculiar excitation, when its spirit is, as it were, evoked by some potent spell, it should be capable of shewing itself for a moment in all the freshness of its pristine youth, ancient literature is then seen to flow the fairest, when it intermingles with the rest of our information, and tinctures the whole current of our thoughts and feelings with its peculiar hue of delicacy and taste. In philosophy, for example, it will receive the facts accumulated by modern research, to sift them with the acute discriminating distinctiveness

that it has learnt from its master Aristotle. In poetry, it will people the visions of the North with glorious ideas of perfectness, and pour a quiet and majestic beauty into the dread sublimities of the Gothic imagination, like the union of day and night, in the richness of sunrise and sunset. In composition, it will adopt and improve on the contrast of light and shade, which form the picturesqueness of modern literature, by softening any offensive glare, tempering all extravagant transitions, blending the parts, however apparently discordant, in a sensible unity of purpose, and spreading carefully over the whole piece the harmonising effect of its own classical *impasto*.

What promise of so rich a maturity the intellect of the candidate holds forth, (for some faint promise may be reasonably hoped for, some blossom we may expect to discover set, or, at least, some bud unfolding,) is the first point that an elector would wish to ascertain. But where must he look to find it? Where, but in those Latin and English compositions, which, notwithstanding the slighting way in which the

Reviewer passes over them, appear two of the most important portions of the examination. In them the candidate is left completely to himself. He can no longer shroud himself in translation, but must shew himself in some measure as he is. His treatment of the subject, the character of his sentiments, his line of thought, his style of expression, the points he urges, the objections he disregards, all afford glimpses into the writer's mind.

Were the Reviewer himself, for example, standing for an open Fellowship, it is possible that in mere construing he might equal his brother candidates. But the moment the writer of such an article began to compose upon a moral subject, the inferiority of his heart and understanding would be delineated in every tracing of his pen. With the exception of an ostentatious and misplaced bravura or two, all his sentiments would be pitched a key too low. Were "Truth" given him for a theme, think you he could urge his nature to the contradiction of writing worthily and consistently upon "Truth?" Were "Fame"

his subject—but it has been so already; and after preluding with hopes and aspirations, “the Diapason ended full in” cheapness. Proh Gloria! Where can this be paralleled? Perhaps, though I doubt it, in Cobbett. I myself recollect nothing quite equal to it, except Dean Swift’s happy^s valuation of the Roman Triumphal Laurel Crown at two-pence. But wheresoever he may have studied ethics, be it under Swift and Cobbett, or elsewhere, he certainly has not learnt

‘I give the sentence entire, that the reader may judge for himself. “In lieu of stalls, mitres, and fat benefices, there “is something still to animate a Scotchman’s exertions in the “field of learning. They must spring from brighter views “and nobler aspirations. We may at least hold up to his “ambition those high hopes and purified desires, that have “filled and fired exalted souls in every age. Present emi-“nence, and future fame—be they shapes or phantoms, “illusions or realities—have *this* solid and permanent ad-“vantage—they will ever be for generous spirits the cheap “substitute of baser impulses; and, *as an easy purchase of* “national distinction, may be promised without fear, as they “may be paid without extravagance.” The clause, which for distinction’s sake I have put in italics, has the additional merit, ni fallor, of being nonsense.

* For this illustration I am indebted to Mr. Wyndham’s great speech against the treaty of Amiens.

either his logic or his style in their good plain school of clear sense, and genuine English. In *him* the setting would be worthy of the stone. To judge from his printed composition^h, we should have false premises, and inconsequent deductions, vulgar images, pedantic words, and phrases fresh from the mint of Babel. Here, a couple of adjoining sentences on such bad terms, that their connection, if not broken, is embarrassed; there, a period in a state of civil war, with the final clause in arms against the beginning; and close to it, perhaps, another taking refuge from its ill example, in the lethargy of no meaning. What then but failure could be the event of his offering himself, thus unqualified, for a Fellowship? And what but the following the practical answer returned by the electors to his application?

With a style of thought and expression which an ancient would be the first to disavow; with not a single classical element discernible in your intellectual or moral character; how can

^h Specimens of most of the faults alleged may be found in one or other of the extracts quoted in my Letter. Instances of *all* of them are to be met with in the Review.

we give you a reward set apart for classical accomplishment? You may possess a thousand merits, but they are not the merits we estimate: and though they may ensure applause on another theatre, they are not admissible into a Fellowship at Oxford.

So long then as composition forms an integral and real part of the examinations in our open Colleges, such men as the Reviewer are ipso facto excluded. Without expecting any one who has not followed me through my course of experiments upon the metal, to appreciate the assay at its full value, all will, I think, allow it to be excellent. Less cannot be deemed of a test, which however useful under ordinary circumstances, rises in importance with the exigency of the case, till it becomes paramount in efficacy on those extreme occasions, wherein from the unusual worthlessness, or extraordinary merit of a candidate, the greatest hazard is staked upon the choice. Taken in conjunction with the other main branch of the examination, the off-hand rendering, (which, be it remembered, the gentleman condescended to suppress,) it forms a complete system, whose

well-designed and practical perfection leaves us in doubt which to admire the most, his candour in omitting a part of it, when he was professing to give a notion of the whole; his discernment in so miserably undervaluing the portion that he retained and estimated; or his honesty in kneading these misstatements and misconceptions into an unfounded and injurious accusation.

I am aware my course may here be naturally interrupted by an enquiry, how I reconcile my assertion that the examination in the Schools tries scholarship less than the open College system, with the fact, that individuals have occasionally succeeded in the last, without having previously succeeded in the first. For, certainly, there is an obvious difficulty in conceiving that any one can have deserved the higher reward, who has justly missed obtaining the lower one. But it is a difficulty only in appearance. I have already reminded you, in the earlier part of my Letter, that many things are at issue in the Schools, beside scholarship strictly so called. Should a candidate for University honours have miscalculated the

time necessary for perfecting himself in the details of the books expected; should he have attempted a larger range of authors than he can master; should his health give way from over exertion beforehand, or his nerves fail him at the hour of trial; any of these causes would be fully enough to lose him the object of his ambition: and yet so missing it, he might still deserve, and among those who knew him still enjoy, a very considerable reputation for scholarship and talent? Does the difficulty still exist, notwithstanding my explanation? The time, which frequently elapses between the two examinations, will, at all events, be enough to remove it. The ten or fifteen months, which not unseldom intervene, if skilfully and assiduously dedicated to study by a young man whose ambition has been quickened, and whose vanity has been sobered, by disappointment, will often more than enable him to repass those among his competitors, who have laid aside their oars with their first success, and who, while they fancy they are still remaining in the spot to which they had

worked their way, are imperceptibly carried down again by the current.

Some again, (for now we are on the subject of objections, it may be as well to dispose of the only other which occurs to me,) some again may be inclined to think, that literary attainments alone should be required from a candidate, and be disposed to join issue on the propriety of taking his moral character into the account. To these the answer is plain. Sound principle and common sense, the nature of our establishments, the object of our institution, and (I doubt not) the will too of the founders, seem to concur in forcing us to look for both. We are to elect neither mouthpieces of wit, nor machines of learning, but men, real men, just as whole in heart as in understanding. A College is a Society, even in its name; should

ⁱ It is unnecessary, I trust, to remark, that in this, as in every other part of my Letter, I am expressing a mere private unauthorized opinion; my purpose here being only to shew, how perfectly the forms of proceeding in these open Colleges seem fitted to the furtherance of *good* learning; for the promoting of which, I think, I am safe in asserting, that they *must* mainly have been endowed.

any one be admitted a member, whom it would be degrading to select for a companion? A College is a religious establishment; should it be open to the profligate and the blasphemer? The State has confided to us, in the management of its youth, the richest of its expectancies, the most delicate of its possessions. How can we answer for the trust? How build up that sincerity of faith, and manliness of household virtue, which, in furnishing the materials of the English character, form the basis of England's greatness; unless we are known to value the morals we extol, and are believed to reverence the doctrines we inculcate? Let loose habits and religious scepticism once be declared admissible into Fellowships; and it is not all the reasoning and persuasion of living teachers; no nor all the trumpet-tongued authority of the dead, that will prevent low debauchery and besotted infidelity from finding their way among the Students. I say, "loose "habits," and "religious scepticism;" and my words must not be strained beyond their fair meaning; small excesses and occasional irregularities, scarce mark the character of a

young man, and the character must have received a dent, to attract the notice of electors. But suppose the case of a defect so great as to be visible to their distant eye; and I have no hesitation in saying, that in my opinion they would be wanting to their duty, if they allowed themselves to be dazzled into overlooking it, by any brilliancy of talent or of attainment.

But it is more than time to return to the last clause of the Reviewer's accusation, in which he tells us, "that the examination is "merely nominal, the real road to success "lying through a low previous *personal* can- "vass."

To bring this within the verge of probability, the great majority of the electors should be resident; for the Reviewer will hardly maintain, that grins or genuflections, however prepossessing, (and the grin, I am forced, from the acknowledged power of smiles, to confess is likely *a fortiori* to be fascinating,) are either of them calculated to work their influences when unseen; or that an elector from the country is likely to shut his eyes to the incapacity which he witnesses himself, because he is told that

the undeserving candidate has paid observance and homage to another. But unluckily for the statement, the non-resident electors form, in the Societies spoken of, usually, I believe, at least one half of the body. Assuming then that they have not been personally canvassed by candidates they have never seen, and perhaps many times have never heard of, these, to make the Reviewer's assertion true, must hurry up from their scattered homes to elections, with the resolution of leaving all choice, when they are arrived, to their resident and canvassed brethren; must concur in a strict and searching examination, without a thought of selecting the most competent; must sacrifice their consciences, and give up the gratification which they would naturally derive from seeing the body, they belong to, ornamented with distinguished men; and all this (as we have shewn) to benefit no one, that they are connected with, either by interest or affection. So probable a concurrence of impossibilities wants but a corresponding fact to make it certain. And fortunately the last election at Oriel has furnished one. Among

the competitors for the one open Fellowship, which, if I am not mistaken, was vacant there, are said to have been several who had obtained "the highest honours of the Schools;" some of them, doubtless, persons of considerable reputation for talent. Still the successful candidate was one, who happened not to have been higher than the Second Class; and who has only more than justified the choice, since, by gaining within two short months of his election, the most scholarlike of the University prizes, the Bachelor's Essay for Latin prose. Who then can question the Reviewer's veracity, when the very case, which seemed made on purpose for him, and which, one could almost fancy, was in his eye in the shape of a rewarded "failure," turns out to be decisive against him? Or who can doubt that the College examinations are but nominal, not to say worthless, when we find them leading electors to results undesignated by general opinion, and subsequently ascertain their guidance to have been good?

All the three clauses or counts then (for all have now been considered) are equally un-

founded and absurd. The partiality of the electors, the insufficiency of the test, the farce of the examination, none of these evils have an existence out of the pages of the Edinburgh Review. And we cannot, on the whole, avoid coming to the conclusion, that our assailant, in this his second accusation, has been still more unfortunate than in his first. In falsehood indeed both are equal, for both are utterly false: in inconsistency too, they rival each other, for in both he has made concessions which paralyse his own statements. But the second accusation is more preposterous than the first, from its far greater disregard of probability; more despicable, from its mean attempt to disfigure facts into bearing an appearance of criminality; and more injurious, in the substance of the matter alleged, in the degree in which “selfishness” is worse than “ignorance,” and “dishonesty” more wilful than “dulness.”

Thus pressed on all sides by confutations, what could any thing but facts avail him? “Either the wise man in print should have “shewed particularly which judgments” of the

electors “ were the judgments of a goose-cap, “ or he must be fain to swallow his own cat^k. ”

But though facts were indispensable to the establishment of his allegations, a measured tone, a calm address, a becoming demeanour, would have broken the shock of their overthrow, and have enabled him to fall with apparent decency. But he has preferred (and it shews the character of his spirit) a course directly the reverse. He has indulged in foul-mouthed generalities, and by tasking his invention for new phrases of abuse, has concocted a *lampoon*, instead of an accusation. He has exhibited a violence so ungovernable, as to have hurried him from his^l subject against places and persons with which that subject had no one natural connection. And as for propriety of demeanour, he has not respected even himself.

^k See the introductory extract.

^l He is writing on the importance of Greek literature, and on the best means of promoting the study of it in Scotland. And the subject (can I without an abuse of terms say?) leads him, first, to accuse certain Colleges in Oxford of not being guided in their elections by merit; and then, to bespatter the members of those Colleges through a long paragraph of invective.

It is impossible that, in speaking of establishments, whose names at least, whatever their deserts may be, he must himself allow, stand high with the public, he can have employed such ill-sounding expressions, as “feline attachment,” “treacherous propensities,” “sleek disguise,” “avoiding cleanliness,” “sordid ambition of success,” “scrapings, grins, and genuine flections,” without perceiving that they must lessen his own reputation in the eyes of the great majority of readers. To what cause then must we attribute a delirium of hostility, which, to strike another, sacrifices itself, “Animamque in vulnera ponit,” and leaves its character to rankle in the wound? As surely as the Malay, before he throws away his life in his ferocious domestic sally, is said to require the borrowed insensibility of opium; so surely must every human heart recoil from entering on so furious a moral *amock*, till it has been driven frantic by the overgoadings of malignity.

The bad feeling, which the studied virulence and headstrong rashness of the attack infer, the offensive personality of the Reviewer estab-

blishes. The cloak of zeal for public good, stretched as it is nearly to tatters, still wants width enough to cover a private attack; and the one before us is more; it is personal. For though “the open Colleges” in a mass are thrown into his universal denunciation, one alone is the object of his fury: the one, which is described indirectly through its examinations, the one which is pointed out expressly in its distinguished head, the author of “dis-“courses on Predestination.” And yet he has said “open Colleges” in the plural number, and left his readers to imagine he meant them all. Was ever man so fitted for a public accuser? What accuracy and scrupulousness of statement! What nice discrimination between shades of delinquency! What an anxiety to exclude every possible individual from his well-defined and narrow indictment!

O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!

But this only proves the attack private. What then shews it to be personal? Not the mere mention of the Discourses on Predestination; but the mentioning them in such a

way as manifests the Reviewer to have designed them for a practical *reductio ad absurdum* of the system which their author superintends? They are the maturest efforts of “a prostituted “youth;” and are joined, perhaps, to exemplify the affinity of extremes, with “obscene “verses in a newspaper.” Nor is this all. Not content with thus collecting the scattered flames of his revilings, to concentrate them against that distinguished person; not satisfied with placing him, as the head, on the pinnacle of the inventions against the College; the Reviewer allots him, in another part of the article, an entire paragraph of abuse to himself, which taxes him in his capacity of champion of the University against the attacks of the Edinburgh Review, with “dulness, malignity,” and a dozen other qualities, as well-selected, complimentary, and true.

It is with backwardness and pain that I restir a controversy, whose ashes I had fain persuaded myself were long ago quite extinct. But I am driven to the step by the perverseness of the Reviewer. By recurring to long past divisions for purposes, not of warning,

but of aggravation, he compels me to follow him to a spot, from which I else had religiously abstained. Such a paragraph of personal abuse must not pass me unchastised; nor shall its own wrong preserve it from the punishment it merits; though, to inflict it, I must call your attention for a moment from the present attack of the Reviewer against our open Colleges, to the charges of his predecessors against our University system.

Of those charges the most weighty were the following. That in Oxford—first, “^oThe scholar had no means of advancing beyond the mere elements of geometry;” secondly, “^pThe dictates of Aristotle were still listened to as infallible decrees;” thirdly, “^qThe solid and masculine parts of the understanding were left wholly without cultivation;” and, fourthly, “^rThe line of study in general, though well adapted to persons intended for the Church, was unsuited to young men who were to be nobles and statesmen.”

To these and a variety of other similar asser-

^o Edinb. Rev. vol. ii. p. 233.

^p Ibid.

^q Vol. xiii. p. 49.

^r Vol. xiii.. p. 52.

tions a positive contradiction was published, under the title of "A Reply to the Calumnies of the Edinburgh Review against Oxford." The pamphlet, which, though printed without a name, has notoriously been given, by common report, to the Author of "Discourses on Predestination," produced a rejoinder from the Edinburgh Review: and it apparently exerted its whole strength to crush its anonymous opponent. But he was not a man to be put down easily, and stood so stoutly on his defence in "a second reply," that the critics retreated silently, and left him (for this occurred in 1810) eleven years in possession of the field. Last October, however, the subject was resumed, and the system of tuition, now practised at Oxford, was thus described by my antagonist the Reviewer.

"In that University, especially, which is considered as "the peculiar patroness of classical knowledge, a system "of education is at length pursued, better calculated "than any which has hitherto been known, to attain "the true end and object of the studies there encou- "raged. Even there, however, there are still left some "vestigia ruris—some relics of imperfection or absur-

“ dity. The rudiments of mathematics are still the height
 “ of the Students’ attainment ; and the barbarisms of the
 “ monkish logic have not yet been hounded from the
 “ schools. But it must be conceded to Oxford, that her
 “ general plan of classical instruction is now con-
 “ ducted on a very liberal and enlightened plan She
 “ may safely appeal to the public examinations for
 “ honours, as a striking test of the justice of this eulo-
 “ gium *The dictates of Aristotle and Plato are no
 “ longer to be stated as authoritative proofs; the Examinee
 “ must have analysed their systems with a good deal of
 “ sceptical rigidity, compared them with the advanced
 “ state of moral science in modern times, and prepared
 “ himself to point out their inconsistencies and errors,
 “ as well as their beauties.* His views of ancient his-
 “ tory, in like manner, must not have been confined to a
 “ mere deglutition of dates and facts: *he must have
 “ philosophised upon the Authors perused, and entered
 “ into the details of antiquity with somewhat of the spirit
 “ of political speculation.*” P. 303, 4.

The same high tone of commendation is continued through another half page ; after which, the writer urges on his countrymen the necessity of attending to Greek learning, promising them as the issue a race of “ *Grenvilles and Wellesleys.*” Now if you will have the good-

ness, Sir, to compare the passages just quoted in Italics, with the assertions in the second, third, and fourth Articles of impeachment which I have copied a couple of pages back, you will find a recantation almost in terms. For in spite of the important "*now*," which they have so carefully printed in Italics, and have advanced, apparently, to cover their retreat; the system, which they now applaud, was perfected in its minutest details, at the period of their first attack upon us, and was established in its main principles, full seven years before: so that the eulogy is tantamount to a confession, that three-fourths, and by far the most important three-fourths, of their former charges against Oxford were, at the very moment when they were published, as opposite to truth, as praise is opposite to accusation. And what ensues on this remarkable acknowledgment? Some blush surely of regret at their former misconceptions! Some explanation to their own misled readers! Some apology to our calumniated University! Some slight amends at least to the able antagonist, against whom (for anticipating their

present judgments, and contradicting them *then*, though not quite so decisively, as they have contradicted themselves now) they directed every kind and degree of abuse that their wholesale ingenuity could furnish! The recantation leads to a new attack on that antagonist, which, following, as it does, on a entire surrender of the chief points in dispute between them, displays a power of rallying, and a pertinacity of boldness, heretofore, I should imagine, unknown in controversy.

“ If our readers could understand the thorough satisfaction with which we pay this tribute to the present state of classical discipline at Oxford, they would comprehend with how much justice we have been sometimes accused of wishing ill to that famous University. “ Even that malignant dulness which formerly took so much pains, first, to misrepresent, and then revile our spirit towards the body it continues to disgrace, might learn to blush for its poor perversions and witless insincerity.” P. 304, 5.

This passes either precedent or belief. The veriest Parthian might learn from a tactician, who can thus wheel to the charge by the road of

real flight, and whose victory is secure if he can only manage to be discomfited. I once heard of an ingenious madman, who fancied he had discovered a perpetual motion, and was enraged beyond measure at a friend's remarking to him, that in order to realize perpetual motion, it was necessary his machine should be set a going: a small circumstance which the inventor had overlooked. This, though absurd enough, would have been no unfair representation of our defender's conduct, had he condescended to "equivocations" and perversions," and advocated a system really inefficient. But, as the case now stands, the story is reversed. The machine, on the Reviewer's own shewing, was moving regularly and freely, when the visitor accused it of standing still. Put to a ten years' silence by the honest replies of the inventor, he suddenly recurs to a subject, which all else had been striving to forget, and thus calls on his friends to join him, in once more inspecting the contrivance. "Pray examine its perfections" attentively; and then imagine, if you can, the "maker's being so malignant as to defend it

“against my attacks, and so insincere as to
“deny its being without merit, when it is de-
“monstrably the best invention of the century.”

So much for the malignant misrepresentations (words happily chosen to signify speaking the truth in self-defence) of the former anonymous vindicator of the University, the writer on Predestination. But his dulness must be measured by a larger standard. To excite an adequate notion of the weakness of the conqueror, we must fix a calculating eye on the strength and reputation of the conquered. We must forget the present shrunken state of the Edinburgh Review, and enlarge our thoughts to a conception of its influence at the period of the contest. The Quarterly had been but lately established; Monthly criticisms had fallen into disrepute: it engrossed the public ear. Its language was striking, confident, and, above all, new; with a tincture of vulgarity in it which allured the many; and a contumaciousness of sarcasm which kept the minority, for fear of drawing down its arrows, silent. Its opinions were as popular as “the spirit of the ‘age,’ by which they were in most points

dictated. Its politics—when the late Ruler of France was still in the zenith of his greatness; before sad experience had taught Reviewers, and convinced their credulous admirers, that the trade of prophet is neither an easy nor a safe one; what could it have been, in politics, but a faithful mirror of water set in ¹brass, to reflect the glories of that dazzling chieftain, and to culminate with his ascendancy, as it has since been overshadowed by his decline? Its contributors too were *then*, I believe, all equal to the parts they undertook; and it counted among the number a few men, confessedly of first rate talent, who looked like giants to the common eye through the medium of mystery which surrounded them, and who threw an imposing air of strength over the whole. What wonder then, if, as the day approached, on which a new number of the Review might be expected in London, thousands of fashionable literatists were to be seen on the tiptoe of ex-

¹ Literally in *brazen lips*.

Qualis aquæ tremulum *labris* ubi lumen *ahenis*,
 Sole repercussum
 Omnia pervolitat latè loca, jamque sub auras
 Erigitur, summique ferit laquearia tecti.

pectation, looking out for the important smack, which was bringing them the taste, the morals, the politics, and the religion, deemed most becoming for the ensuing quarter. It was in this its fulness of reputation and authority that our champion encountered the Edinburgh Review, and the result was the most perfect literary victory that the present century has seen. Above forty questions, of more or less moment, arose during the progress of the discussion, some involving niceties of scholarship, some accuracy of deduction, some limited to matters of mere fact, some again embracing points of moral reasoning; and on all these, excepting at the utmost two, he had an evident indisputable complete superiority.

Even then supposing the author of the discourses to have confined the exertion of his talents as a writer within this single effort, few would have admired either the judgment or the taste of the Review, in disparaging powers which, be they what they may, have at least proved themselves sufficient to disarm and overpower some of the ablest and most popular of its sons. But his two Replies were

among the earliest of his writings. He has since published a volume of Latin Lectures, the fruits of his Professorship of Poetry, which competent judges have admired equally for soundness of criticism and purity of style. He has the credit of being the author of the two celebrated Letters to Mr. Peel, on the bullion question and on the poor laws: the first of which found its way even into the House of Commons, where, if I am not mistaken, it was quoted by Mr. Tierney with applause. Lastly, he has published discourses on Predestination, to the Reviewer's opinion of which I shall be more disposed to listen patiently, when his temper and intellect have undergone the lustration requisite to procure them admission into the sanctuary, where Philosophy sits enshrined, a severer deity than ever awed the imagination of Phidias, with brow fixed upwards in patient thought, and eye peering into the clouds that hang just above its head, and veil from its scrutiny the depths of heaven. And this is the individual, respectable, distinguished, esteemed for his learning by scholars, praised for his views of polity by statesmen,

yet wise enough to turn from the praise of both, and lay his maturest talents upon the altar, who is set up as a mark to obloquy and scorn, because he formerly defended the University he belongs to, from what are acknowledged to be false aspersions; and because—if there be indeed another reason, you perhaps, Sir, as living nearer the scene of action, may be more in the secret, but it passes my poor sagacity to discover it.

But why does the Reviewer, in the same breath, praise our University system? Oxford may be stupid, and ignorant, and what they will except false and malignant; and the author of the discourses may then consistently be accused of sharing in all these qualities: but to exalt the Oxford system, and yet abase Dr. Copleston, who is so perfect a master of its details, and is so thoroughly impregnated with its principles, is like admiring Scotland, yet decrying Scott; or, in other words, is like loving a species from aversion to its special characteristic.

This is so evident, that unless the 'Reviewer turned his head away from the object he was

aiming at, I cannot conceive how he missed seeing it. It is not, however, because his blindness, in this respect, bears a fanciful resemblance to the unsteady-eyed trepidation of a recruit, that I have felt justified in charging him with cowardice. But I deem it symptomatic of cowardice in an accuser, whose meaning is particular, when, instead of stating his allegation with openness and precision, he screens himself under the latitude of a general attack: which I have shewn to be the case in the present instance. I deem it evidence of cowardice in an accuser, if after he has concentrated his meaning in a personal attack, instead of abiding his self-sought hazard, he allows the strength and spirit of his charge to fly off during its exposure to the press, leaving nothing but a weak and vapid residue for the public. And this too has been the case in the present instance. In half the copies of the article, you will find no trace of “obscene “verses in a newspaper, and Discourses on “Predestination:” the expression having been altered in the later impressions into “learned “drivelling, and marrowless inflation.”—But

perhaps the change is attributable to a worthier motive than fear.—Could I have thought so, nothing should have induced me to quote the passage in its original state. I would have accepted the hasty obliteration, as the best immediate amends within the Reviewer's power, and would have regarded what he had been thus attempting to undo, as undone in the fullest meaning of the term. But to what other cause is it referable? Not to penitence, or he never would have substituted so foul a phrase of vague abuse. Not to tenderness for the feelings of the individual, as you will perceive, Sir, by examining the paragraph about “malignant dulness.” There too, in these same later impressions, a trifling alteration is introduced, to diminish? no, to aggravate the charge. Instead of continuing to accuse him of taking pains “*first to misrepresent, and then revile*” them, the Reviewers discover before the article is printed off, that the expression is inadequate to the wilfulness of his offence, and inform us in their second and corrected copy, that he misrepresented them *in order to revile*. Here then we have two attacks, both directed

against the same person. The one, in which he is specified, is weakened ; the one, in which he is hinted at, is strengthened. Is it compunction, that prompted the additional injustice ? Is it tenderness, that inflicted the deeper sting ? Or is it not rather cowardice, that curtailed the open attack, and then indemnified malignity by adding to the oblique one ?

My undertaking then is all but accomplished. Personal and malignant and false in matter, and virulent and cowardly in manner, what did I start with asserting of the Reviewer's two first accusations, which the discussion has not more than established ? Still, however, there remains a third and last proposition of his, which at the beginning of my Letter I undertook to weigh. I allude to his notion, that the abuses which he complains of, supposing them really to exist, are of a nature to be ascertained and corrected, by placing the various open Colleges, I should rather say the one open College, to which his observations refer, under the jurisdiction of the Education Committee. This notion I had intended to prove ridiculously silly, and would do it, but that

absurdity so evident cannot surely require to be pointed out. For give the Committee all the power that the Reviewer could ask or wish for; and when the time comes for exerting it, how are they to proceed? Are they to call on the present Fellows, to state why they were preferred; as the jealous madman questioned his child, on its reminiscences of its own conception? Or are they, in preference, to summon the unsuccessful candidates, to explain the secret causes of their rejection? and listen to depositions of belief composed of hearsay probabilities and surmises? As to act on either statement would be manifestly unjust to secure the slightest approximation to the truth, it will be necessary to subject all who have ever stood for open Fellowships to a second regular literary examination: of course charging it on their consciences to perform their exercises, not according to their present ability, (for that, too, would be evidently unfair,) but according to what they guess to have been their knowledge, at the time when they offered themselves to the electors. Or rather, since the collection of new evidence is impeded by such

manifold difficulties, the ample materials which cannot but exist, *in posse* at least, if not *in esse*, must perhaps be resorted to for the purpose; and the echoes of long past renderings, and the ashes of forgotten themes, must be caught, collected, decyphered, and done into English, to serve the ends of this practicable visitation. Well! the enquiry, spite of obstacles, is entered on, and completed: to what one desirable result can it, in the nature of things, lead? The faults which it would bring to light, on the Reviewer's own shewing, are not such as admit of remedy and prevention from without. All the mis-elections, he complains of, as long as they neither involved a palpable violation of statute, nor were traceable to a corrupt motive, (and; observe, the Reviewer insinuates neither,) would be regarded by the wise indulgence of the legislature, at the most, as unintentional and allowable errors: errors—irresponsibility for which, is included in the discretionary power that must ever remain inseparable from the office of elector, till, by reducing contingencies to certainty, you can bestow a right of choice with-

out entrusting a liberty of selection.—But enquiry would bring to light feline attachments, and detect treacherous propensities—Be it so, and what then? Attachments and propensities, however feline or treacherous, are dispositions, and not crimes. Infinite in their shapes and modes of operation, where will you discover the materials for fetters, to confine spirits subtle as these? Working secretly, how can a committee stop? Swaying imperceptibly, how can law control them? It might as easily stop the mouth of the Niger, or control the action of subterranean fire. The utmost exertion of the Committee's authority could but reach to remonstrances and recommendations; so that the ghosts of departed examinations are to be disturbed, and the Education Committee are to be taught Greek to question them, for the sake of producing, as the utmost possible result, a vote of censure against feline attachments.

I am now, I think, justified in affirming, that all the Reviewer's batteries against our open Colleges have been either destroyed, or turned against himself. Here then my task finishes, and I turn from it with a feeling of satisfaction,

at being exempted by the limits of my design from the necessity of following him further. To his three assertions against Oxford at large, my talents, as an annotator, are not sufficient to do justice. I understand not how the University can have taken away from Locke, what it can neither give nor take from any one—a studentship of *Christ Church*; though it must have done it, as the Reviewer says so. Neither can I explain how it refused 'Doctor Johnson a degree, that was never asked for; though it must have done it, as the Reviewer says so. But, above all, I am at a loss to find a name for the assertion, that "the rudiments of Mathematics are still the height of the student's attainment:" and recollecting that a similar proposition, after having previously been hazarded and disproved, was eleven years ago acknowledged by the Reviewer of La Place to be wholly^u inapplicable to the present Oxford system, and that consequently its reiteration, in the same work, under the permit of the same Editor, must pass, until thoroughly ex-

^t See Appendix, No. II.

^u Edinb. Rev. vol. xvi. p. 165.

plained, for a falsehood no less wilful than injurious; I rejoice that, ungifted as I feel myself with microscopic intensesness of perception, I am not called on to discover the unsuspected but doubtlessly ascertainable distinction that divides so positive a repetition of an acknowledged calumny, from slanders of the monosyllabic order.

With the Reviewer's other mistakes I have no concern. He may, if he pleases, continue to speak of ^xAretinus or Chrysoloras and Erigena, as contemporaries, and leave his readers to suspect him of having gleaned his literary chronology from the ^yFabliaux. He may persevere when he speaks of Erigena "^zthe Scot," in printing

^x " During the first dawnings of returning light, which
" broke in upon the ages of darkness, when an Aretinus or
" Chrysoloras in one quarter, were recovering for the world
" the sublimity of Homer, and the eloquence of Cicero,—and
" Erigena THE SCOT in another," &c. P. 302.

^y Where Hippocrates is represented as court-physician to Augustus.

^z He was either an Irishman, or, as Cave rather believes, a Welchman. Whichever country he came from, he certainly appears to have been one of the most considerable thinkers of his age, turning his thoughts to a variety of subjects, and amongst others to the great question of Predestination, on which he wrote a book.

the two last words in capitals, though that philosopher was certainly not a Scotchman. He may go on drawing up definitions of enthusiasm, which, as a friend well observed to me, read just as well backwards as ^aforwards. He may persist in writing such enigmas instead of sentences as “^bthe Stocks and Bardi of alternate annotation,” and in reckoning “local knowledge” among the ingredients of literary fame. He may continue to maintain, that the study of Greek will people Scotland with Sir W. Joneses, though the recent example of Leyden, with all his nobleness of character and wonderful capacity of acquirement, proves but too clearly that, to complete the metamorphosis, something more beside Greek is wanting. Or should this promise appear too weak an incentive for his

^a In the one case, “taste and genuine enthusiasm would lead the scholar, in studying the models of antiquity, rather to imitate than worship, rather to emulate than imitate.” In the other, they would lead him “rather to imitate than emulate, rather to worship than imitate.” The reader will, I fancy, be at a loss to decide which of the two is the right reading.

^b See Appendix, No. III.

countrymen, he may repeat his assurances, that the study, if pursued, will transform them into Grenvilles and Wellesleys. Though every one who can perceive in these two great men the national characteristics which distinguish them; who is aware that culture is to perfect fruits, by heightening the quality, not by altering the kind; who understands that, in the same way, national character, though it may be elevated or purified by a new and wholesome study, will preserve its raciness through every such modification; who feels, for example, that the Earl of Lauderdale, whatever progress he had made in Greek, (and I have no reason for supposing that his Lordship is not master of it already,) would still remain a very different person from the Chancellor of the University of Oxford; every such person, when first greeted with this project of naturalising in Scotland English Grenvilles and Irish Wellesleys, (wonders and happy accidents as we know them to be, even in their proper countries,) must have been startled at meeting names so unexpected in the conclusion of a serious paragraph ; and have been reminded of the equally

illustrious and equally unanticipated introduction of Epaminondas and Curius Dentatus at the end of Mr. Canning's German play.

In these, and such-like points of history and taste, whether people are startled or no, the Reviewer's right still remains unquestioned. But let him abstain from causelessly attacking Oxford, either as a whole, or in any of its parts. Let him lift a reverential eye to its establishments, which, after surviving manners, opinions, studies, prejudices, a system of polity, even a mode of faith, still flourish unaltered, and unimpaired ; that he may gather from the contemplation the folly of assailing them with the paper-pellets of an ill-disciplined invention. Let him learn, that no credit, of any kind, attaches to unsupported charges, contradictory assertions, scandalous insinuations, and vague abuse, especially when directed against the learned and the good.. What if he point out, in vindication, the half dozen inaccuracies which, I suppose, have crept into my defence, notwithstanding my anxiety to exclude them ? What if he shew, that in one or two particulars the argument itself is overstated ;

though to avoid that danger, I have more than once refrained from pushing it to the length that it would go? All this will avail him nothing. After he had struck off four-fifths of my conclusions, enough would still adhere to him to mark out, for the information of any eccentric moralist, who may hereafter desire admission into the Edinburgh Review, in what *ad libitum* digressions from justice, wisdom, accuracy, courteousness, and truth, he may fearlessly indulge his bent, without incurring the penalty of exclusion from its pages.

To you, Sir, I have still to offer my apologies for the liberty that I have now taken. But, in truth, when I began, I did not anticipate the length at which I was to trespass on your attention. And beside wishing to ensure for my statement the credibility that it must acquire, from being addressed to a gentleman who is universally known to be a competent judge of the points at issue between the Reviewer and myself; there were reasons which might induce me to believe, that the step would not be altogether disagreeable to you. As an Oxford man, you would naturally rejoice at

seeing charges against Oxford refuted. As a member of the University settled in Scotland, it seemed probable you would feel the compliment of being nominated the judge of our controversy ; and if you were likely to be a moment annoyed at witnessing the exposure of your countryman, that feeling, on the other hand, was sure to be counterbalanced by your disgust at his shameless plagiarism upon yourself. His article concludes with an observation upon the balance of power, which few would sus-

“ “ If there be one fact more certain than another in ancient history, it is this—that a permanent balance of power, on the principles now understood and established, was an idea that never entered into the head of an ancient politician. A *temporary* equipoise was sometimes attempted; but even that was everlastingly deranged by *systematic bad faith and restless jealousies*. *The fifth book of Thucydides alone, that singular epitome of Grecian politics, contains enough to set this question at rest for ever.*” *Edinburgh Review for October.*

“ *The fifth book of Thucydides, that singular epitome of Grecian politics, contains enough to convince us, that although the acutest politicians of the ancient world might appreciate the value of a balance of power, it was but a temporary balance they ever wished to create; and that although they had wished to make it permanent, systematic bad faith and restless jealousies must have baulked the best concerted schemes.*” *Mr. Sandford’s Prize Essay, recited in June.*

pect, by the way in which he introduces it, was taken, almost word for word, from an Oxford Prize Essay. But the fact is so, and I rejoice that I can conclude with restoring the stolen property to its right owner.

I remain, Sir,

With all due respect,

Your obedient humble Servant,

A MEMBER OF A CLOSE COLLEGE.

APPENDIX.

No. I. Page 9.

THE King's Hall and College of Brasen-nose was founded in 1507, by the joint benefaction of William Smith, Bishop of Lincoln, and Sir R. Sutton, Knt. of Prestbury, in Cheshire, for a Principal and twelve Fellows, natives of the old diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, so that they, who were born in the counties of Lancaster and Chester, (both then in that diocese,) and particularly in the parishes of Prescot and Prestbury in the said counties, be preferred. If it should happen that none of the said counties or diocese be eligible, then, in defect of such, the Society was to choose, first from the diocese of Lincoln, and then from the University at large. Eight Fellowships have since been added; viz. two by the will of J. Williamson, Rector of St. George's, Canterbury; which are confined to the kindred of the said J. Williamson, or of John Pott, Serjeant at Law, who are born in the city or county palatine of Chester: one by John Elton, alias Baker, Canon of Salisbury; with a preference to his kindred born in the diocese of Hereford or Worcester, in defect of which, the Society is to elect, first from the diocese of Salisbury, and then from any other place according to desert: one by W. Porter, Clerk; first for the county or diocese of Hereford, and then for any

diocese next adjacent towards Oxford: one by E. Darbie, Archdeacon of Stow, in Lincolnshire; for a graduate born, first in the said Archdeaconry, secondly in Leicestershire, thirdly in Northamptonshire, and lastly in the diocese of Lincoln, should no such graduate be found, then an undergraduate is to be elected subject to the same limitations: one by W. Clyfton, Sub-dean of York; for a priest and graduate, first from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire alternately, then from Nottinghamshire, and lastly from the University at large. One by Brian Higden, Dean of York; for Yorkshire and Lincolnshire alternately. One by Joyce Frankland, of London, widow; for her own kindred, especially the kindred of the Trapps and Saxies, or, in defect of such, for any county in England.

Such are the various regulations by which the different Fellowships of Brasen-nose are said to be limited. The description of so nicely graduated a scale of local preferences seems to furnish a member of a close College with a fair occasion, for saying a few words in vindication of a system to which he owes what little he possesses, and for shewing that it is calculated to produce advantages of its own, which would be lost under a system exclusively open. Not that I would advocate a pre-destined irrespective reservation of certain literary emoluments for certain individuals; but so complete an appropriation is very rarely, if at all, to be found. Most of these Fellowships instead of being quite closed, are, more properly speaking, set a-jar. The favoured candidate has a preference if duly qualified, not a claim whether he is qualified or no. Whatever qualifications the Founder seems to expect, (and the higher they are put, so they

be not unreasonable, the better,) I would have most rigorously and notoriously required. Perhaps a frequent recurrence of limited competitions between two or more privileged candidates is requisite to ensure the habitual exercise of this most necessary strictness. But supposing this object to be once secured, as it is in those more loosely-restricted Fellowships which either embrace whole dioceses and counties, or are filled from our public schools, the defence of the close system is plain and easy. The principles, which I would rest it on, are these. Rewards, when in themselves equal, operate on the mind in proportion to its sense of their inseparability from the exertion by which it is to obtain them. Men will readily both stake and act with the odds against them; but they are not inclined to labour with assiduity, much less to practise self-denial, except when they fancy the odds to be in their favour. A fancy much more easily generated by the close system, than the open one, from the scale of merit in the latter being felt to be comparative. Again, the open system, if carried to its greatest theoretical extreme, would convert each College into a sort of literary congress from every Society in Oxford, with no bond of union to connect the members, besides the obnoxiously personal one of talent. But on the other hand, when a College is endowed with Fellowships for a particular county, young men from that county are naturally anxious to be entered at it; by which, the system of transplantation from one Society to another, always, I should think, in itself an evil, is equally limited in necessity and in extent.

The Fellowships appropriated to boys from public schools enjoy the same advantage to a still greater

degree. Besides which, they, in fact, furnish the only theoretically perfect specimens of systematic English education, inasmuch as they are the only institutions that combine its two great divisions into one visible and consistent whole. By them, and by them alone, are the interests and studies of boyhood and of youth as evidently linked together, as their years. If they do not operate as motives, after youths have entered at the University; it is because they have operated before. The good has been done already. Habits of application, and a taste for literature, have been formed in the boy, while earning his Fellowship at school; he has been allured into threading the defiles which narrow the first approach to knowledge, and his eyes have caught a glimpse of its champaign stretching invitingly and accessibly before him. Should other motives be wanting in his new situation to supply the deficiency of pecuniary inducement, (the last that, generally speaking, one would naturalize in a young mind,) they will be found, if any where, in the character, which having established, he will grieve to lose, and in the hopes, which having awakened, he will be anxious to satisfy. Where the expectations of a parent, and the cravings of a spirit sharpened by the first sweet relish of success, have conjointly failed of stimulating to exertion; it were idle to imagine that alacrity would have been produced by the leaden spur of a distant monied contingency. In the mean time, the expences of University education have, at all events, been alleviated to certain parents, in consequence of their children having proved themselves fit objects of classical instruction. And this leads me to remark, with what happy skill the plan of these institu-

tions was adjusted. In them, as they must have presented themselves to the conceptions of their founders, (for the question regards only the fixed principles of the system, not points so fluctuating as practice and details,) in them, the students were to be all picked, that no instruction might be wasted from the inadequacy of the recipients. Industry, there were probable grounds for hoping, was ensured by that equality of abilities and attainments, which, as it may fairly be expected among the majority of boys educated at the same school, and selected for the same merits, so is the surest parent of honourable rivalry, and zealous copartnership in exertion. Lastly, tuition was confided to a teacher, who by having previously trodden the same course, had not only practically ascertained the strengths and weaknesses of the system, but had acquired a key to the imaginations of his pupils, which ensured him access to their intellects and to their affections. It is difficult to conceive a more beautifully devised system, could it be carried into operation on a sufficient scale. But one requires large vessels to aid the process of fermentation.

No. II. Page 59.

Boswell's account of the matter is as follows: "An offer being made (Johnson) of the Mastership of a School, provided he could obtain the degree of M. A. Dr. Adams," who, I conceive, was at that time tutor of Pembroke, "was applied to, by a common friend, to know whether that could be granted to him as a favour from the University of Oxford. But though he had made such a figure in the literary world, it was then thought too great a favour to be

"asked." (Vol. I.) And here, till an individual's declining to ask, is shewn to be a fair synonym for a body's refusing to grant, the matter might be safely left. But I am prepared to go a step further, and to maintain that Dr. Adams acted very wisely. For when was the application to him made? In the summer, it appears, of 1738, not five months after the publication of "London," which, as Boswell himself tells us, was "what first displayed Johnson's transcendent powers, and gave the world assurance of the man." It is quite clear from the whole tenor of the business, that the application would have been made equally, had London never been written; and that it was neither more nor less than a friendly attempt at a job, not with a design to pay Johnson a compliment, but for the purpose of rendering him eligible to the mastership of a school. Some years afterwards indeed, when the number and character of his works had given him a real claim on Oxford, the degree of A. M. first, and subsequently that of LL.D. were asked of the University for him, upon proper grounds, not as sources of emolument, but as honours. *And they were both granted.* The degree of A. M. in 1755, that of LL.D. in 1775.

No. III. Page 61.

Were the Reviewer likely to be at home in the Byzantines, I should suspect Bardi of being a missprint, and guess that Bardas was the individual alluded to. The historian, in a passage which I stumbled on by chance, describes him as a clever, troublesome, meddling person, with a spice of the reformer in his composition, who kept a pet calumniator in the shape of a

Greek *παιδαγωγός*. This worthless tool *οὗγανον πονηρὸν* appears to have been sharpened to the task by disappointed vanity, and personal rancour. In consequence of missing a situation of emolument and honour that he had looked for, he set himself with great activity, under the direction of his patron Bardas, to abuse the excellent and distinguished individual to whose interference he attributed his disappointment. All this is quite disgusting enough to excite the spleen of the Editor and the Reviewer. But still, what does alternate annotation mean? Is it, that they wove the calumny in partnership? If so, the *παιδαγωγός* must be the Stock.

THE END.

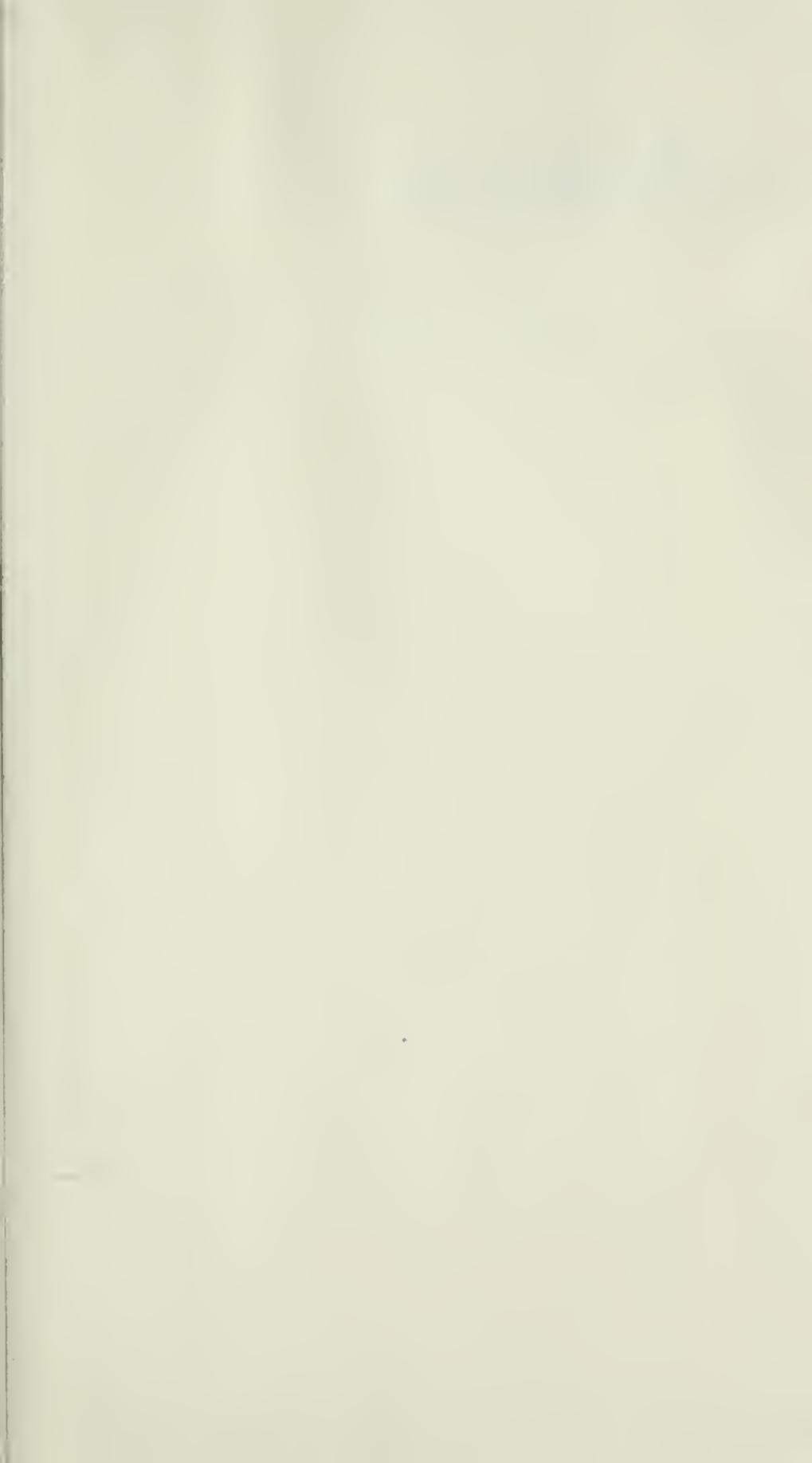
CORRECTIONS.

Page line

- 4. 21. *after they insert or he*
- 12. 12. *for except (that, read except that, (*
- 12. 13. *for and above all that read and, above all, that*
- 20. 3. *for But, thirdly, the read But the*
- 21. 2. *for these two are read these are*
- 25. 9. *for form read forms*
- 27. 9. *for wheresoever he read wheresoever the Reviewer*
- 31. 11. *for talent? read talent.*
- 42. note. *for vol. ii. read vol. xi. and for vol. xiii. read vol. xv.*
- 56. 14. *after unjust insert ;*
- 63. 11. *before even insert and*
- 69. 17. *for favour. A read favour—a*
- 71. 11. *after so is insert it*

6520
47 8 39
123

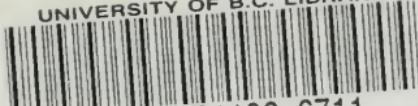




University of British Columbia Library

DUE DATE

UNIVERSITY OF B.C. LIBRARY



3 9424 01192 6711

DISCARD

